

# Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Overview

## What We Do

DHSS's aspiration is to protect health and keep people safe.

At our core, we at DHSS execute the following foundational responsibilities:

- Providing public health services and support to all citizens.
- Ensuring regulation of facilities and service providers that deliver care to Missourians.
- Performing oversight of programs and protections for our elderly and vulnerable residents.



DHSS has 1,802 team members responsible for the stewardship of \$2.9 billion in taxpayer funding.

## The DHSS Strategic Plan

As part of [Public Health Accreditation Board \(PHAB\)](#) reaccreditation efforts submitted in 2021, DHSS identified 17 key public health issues affecting the State of Missouri. Those key issues led to the development of six strategic priorities outlined in the State Health Improvement Plan. Programmatic activities, grant applications and performance management efforts will all align with the following strategic priorities.

Obesity	Heart Disease	Diabetes	Cancer	Tobacco Use
Workforce Development & Training	Collaboration	Emerging Public Health Threats Preparedness	Infant & Maternal Health	Health Inequities & Disparities
Opioid Use	Behavioral Health	Oral Health	Violent Crime/ Intentional Injury	Health Service Access & Cost
Economics			Built Environment	

Public Health  
System Building

Infant & Maternal  
Health

Health Behavior

Emerging Public  
Health Threats  
Preparedness

Social Determinants  
of Health

Whole Person  
Health Access

# The Divisions of DHSS

- The oversight for DHSS comes from the director, who is responsible for the management of the department and the administration of its programs and services.
- The divisions of Administration, Community & Public Health, Regulation & Licensure, Senior & Disability Services, and the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory, and Offices of Public Information, General Counsel, Governmental Policy & Legislation report to the director.

## DHSS Director's Office

- Provides leadership and coordination across the department and articulates the department's vision and goals.
- Provides advice and counsel on public health and senior services issues to the Governor and legislature and facilitates the department's partnership with local public health agencies, Area Agencies on Aging and other health organizations addressing public health and senior services.



Paula Nickelson  
Acting DHSS Director



Dr. Laura Naught  
DHSS Deputy Director

## Division of Administration

- Provides support for budgeting, accounting, expenditure control, procurement, grants and contract administration, legislative review, general office support services, human resources and operational excellence.
- Prepares the departmental budget submission and responds to budget-related inquiries and fiscal note requests.



Marcia Mahaney  
Division of Administration Director

## Missouri State Public Health Laboratory

- Executes Missouri's newborn screening program to identify infants that will require life-enhancing or life-saving medical treatments.
- Completes environmental sampling testing, food surveillance testing, sexually transmitted infection testing and infectious disease testing.
- Serves as Missouri's key facility in the event of possible biological and chemical terrorism exposure response events and needs.



Mike Massman  
Missouri State Public Health Laboratory Director

## Division of Community and Public Health

- Coordinates with local public health agencies to ensure timely and appropriate responses to public health risks.
- Operates the state's WIC nutritional assistance program, summer food and commodity-based food programs.
- Oversees programs aimed at addressing population needs associated with cancer, traumatic brain injuries, heart disease, diabetes, sexually transmitted infections and other chronic or acute trauma diseases.
- Oversees the Bureau of Vital Records to secure, certify, issue and amend records for births, deaths, marriages, divorces and adoptions.



Lori Brenneke  
Division of Community and Public Health Director

# The Divisions of DHSS

## Division of Senior and Disability Services

- Investigates alleged abuse, neglect and financial exploitation and provides adult protective services in collaboration with local law enforcement and prosecuting authorities.
- Authorizes, oversees and provides care-planning services for elderly or disabled Missourians.
- Oversees the Money Follows the Person program, assisting seniors and adults with disabilities returning to the community from a long-term stay in a skilled nursing facility.
- Monitors and oversees Older Americans Act programs through Area Agencies on Aging, and serves as a key information source for seniors and adults with disabilities.
- Operates the Ombudsman office and network of volunteers to serve as advocates for residents of Missouri's long-term care facilities.



Melanie Highland  
Division of Senior and  
Disability Services Director

## Division of Regulation and Licensure

- Inspects long-term care facilities, hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, renal dialysis facilities, clinical laboratories, locations with medical radiation devices, home health agencies and hospice providers.
- Licenses prescribers and dispensers of controlled substances, emergency medical technicians, ambulance services, nursing home administrators, residential care and assisted living administrators, and adult day care providers.
- Conducts background screenings of those who care for children, seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Designates hospitals in the state as Trauma Centers, Stroke Centers and STEMI Centers.
- Operates the Medical Marijuana Regulatory Program.



Steve Bollin  
Division of Regulation  
and Licensure Director

## Director's Office Support Services

- Provides advice and counsel on public health and senior issues, legal services, governmental policy and legislation.
- Coordinates all public information released by DHSS, including media contacts and information in response to inquiries from other agencies and the public.



Michael Oldweiler  
Governmental Policy  
& Legislation



Richard Moore  
General Counsel



Lisa Cox  
Office of Public  
Information

## How DHSS Delivers Services

DHSS directly performs many functions while a large majority of DHSS's programs and services are delivered through contracts with third parties overseen by DHSS.

- DHSS contracts with the 115 Local Public Health Agencies to improve public health;
- DHSS contracts with the 10 Area Agencies on Aging to improve the lives of seniors;
- DHSS contracts with institutions of higher education for a variety of purposes; and
- DHSS works with home and community based services (HCBS) providers throughout the state who assist Missouri seniors and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes.



Local Public  
Health Agencies



Area Agencies  
on Aging



Higher Education  
Institutions



HCBS Providers

# DHSS Success Stories

## MO VIP Program

DHSS established Missouri's Vaccine Incentive Program (MO VIP) to incentivize COVID-19 vaccination, while also providing an opportunity for rewards for the Missourians who had already made the decision to be protected. 800 adults were randomly selected as winners of a \$10,000 cash prize, and 100 minors were awarded a \$10,000 MOST 529 college savings account. During the life of the program, 57,117 adults (18 and over) and more than 39,000 adolescents ages 12-17 received at least a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.



## COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution



Over 8 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the State of Missouri since December 2020 due to vaccine distribution efforts coordinated through DHSS. In partnership with external stakeholders and local public health agencies, DHSS established:

- The Missouri Advisory Committee on Equitable COVID Vaccine Distribution.
- Over 1,000 vaccination events administering 475,000 doses across the State of Missouri.
- Programs to provide transportation to vaccination sites for individuals facing a transportation barrier.

## Missouri Medical Marijuana Regulatory Program

Missouri was able to implement its medical marijuana program in just over 23 months, compared to the national average of 29 months. At the end of 2021, Missouri has over 300 facilities open, more than 160,000 qualified patients, and over 3,000 caregivers active in the program. Fourteen months after the first sale to a qualified patient occurred in a Missouri medical marijuana dispensary, the total sales as part of the state-regulated medical marijuana program reached the \$200 million mark.



## COVID-19 Variant Sequencing



The Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) implemented viral genome sequencing for the detection of COVID-19 variants in January of 2021. Within two weeks, the MSPHL was able to identify and monitor which variants were circulating in Missouri through active surveillance, which allows for the rapid identification of novel COVID-19 variants to provide an immediate public health response.

## Missouri State Employee of the Month: Chelsea Gibbs

Chelsea Gibbs, an investigator with the DSDS Special Investigations Unit, worked a Domestic Assault First Degree case in Audrain County. Chelsea was able to obtain and execute multiple search warrants on social media accounts belonging to the suspects in this case, which uncovered a plethora of supporting evidence to their involvement in the assault. After gathering all evidence and establishing probable cause, Chelsea submitted her case file to the prosecuting attorney's office resulting in charges filed immediately. Chelsea then worked with multiple law enforcement offices, prosecutors, and the Missouri Attorney General's Office, resulting in the arrests and conviction of the defendants. While investigating this matter, Chelsea demonstrated immense professionalism, diligence, perseverance and commitment to justice for the victim.

